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LETTER DATED 17 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the note verbale dated 12 February 1998 presented by the Government of Turkey to the Government of Greece for the settlement of the entire set of the Aegean problems.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-03837 (E) 190298

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Annex

Note verbale dated 12 February 1998 presented by the Government of Turkey to the Government of Greece at the Embassy of Greece at Ankara

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey presents its compliments to the Embassy of Greece and has the honour to request the Embassy to communicate the following views and proposals of the Government of Turkey to the Government of Greece.

As two neighbouring and allied countries, Turkey and Greece should enjoy friendly relations and an atmosphere of understanding and mutual accommodation should prevail between them. This would be in the interest of not only the two nations, but of the region as a whole.

Today, owing to the existence of a set of unresolved questions over the Aegean, the two countries are facing tensions in their relations. It should be a cause of concern for both that this situation is liable to give rise to unintended and undesirable incidents which could escalate into a serious confrontation.

In order to avert such a risk and to chart a positive course in their relationship, the two countries should promptly and jointly initiate a substantive process of conciliation while carefully refraining from any unilateral acts and respecting each other's vital interests in the Aegean.

In the context of such a process, the two countries should, in the first instance, make a sincere and good-willed effort to clearly identify all the questions between them with regard to the Aegean. This should be the first step that the two countries should jointly take in order to move towards the peaceful settlement of the entire set of the Aegean problems to be so identified.

Simultaneously, the two countries should take the following steps which would pave the way for resolving their bilateral issues:

The two Governments should formalize the Madrid Declaration of 8 July 1997 which sets out principles and commitments that should govern their relationship.

The two Governments should commit themselves to developing and mutually implementing in full a package or confidence-building measures in collaboration with the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The two Governments should agree to convene the Personalities Group without further delay and to help the Group to fulfil its agreed mandate.

In order to discuss the above-mentioned proposals, the Government of the Republic of Turkey has the honour to formally invite the Government of Greece to jointly convene a high-level meeting between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries not later than the end of March 1998, either in Ankara or in Athens.

The Government of the Republic of Turkey hopes that serious and favourable consideration will be given to its proposals by the Government of Greece and looks forward to receiving its positive response.